Mrs. M. E. Tilly
Southern Regional Council
63 Auburn Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta 3, Ga.

The Petal Paper

VOL. 4, NUMBER 24 SINGLE COPY TEN CENTS THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1957

East Side

By P. D.

As an ardent television fan I feel inclined to make a minor criticism of one program I watch every Sunday afternoon. The program is Zoo Parade. To date I've seen every kind of animal thus far captured, including, on one occasion, hearing the recorded heart-beat of a rodent and an elephant. Now, this is interesting, as well as educational, I'll grant. But why have they failed to show "Our Gem" on the Zoo Parade? And that's my gripe!

There have been a few minor complaints made relative to my views on religion, and my views on organized religion, especially. Frankly, I have no idea as to how to go about making myself clear on the matter, in view of the fact that people read into anything exactly what they want to read into it.

In reality, I ain't nothing but a frustrated preacher, and I hereby admit it. But for the life of me I fail to see the necessity of all the triple talk and water dunking as [illegible] to believing in God. It just ain't necessary

Letters

Phoenix, Arizona
April 15, 1957

Mr. P. D. East, Editor
The Petal Paper,
Petal, Mississippi

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is my check for which please send me as many future issues of the Petal Paper as Ten Dollars entitles a subscriber to receive.

I have just finished re-reading for the umpteenth time, "The Iconoclast of Petal, Mississippi" by Albert Vorspan in the March issue of The Reporter. It finally occurred to me (I am an ex-Missourian and therefore thick-headed in the manner of many of the citizens of your state) that the Petal Paper should be a welcome addition in my mailbox.

There must indeed be "lots of people who think the way I do" not only in Mississippi, but in every other part of the country as well. Unfortunately most of us lack your courage, a fact of which you are no doubt painfully aware. Above all don't turn long-hair or crusader, William Faulkner and his dead cats be damned, continue to write just as you have been doing.

Thank you very much.
Very truly yours,
James B. Reid.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

By A Golden Named Harry—
'Baby Doll' And David Dubinsky

In its relation to life, "Baby Doll" is a good movie. In its specific relation to the South, it is a scream, and the best proof of this is that the move is playing all over the South without a ripple. When you are poor you do not want your "early beginnings" paraded before you. But when you are rich, you exaggerate those early "struggles," and speak with pride of the time you got up at four o'clock in the morning to milk the cows and deliver the newspaper —and the South is RICH today, fabulously rich, and getting richer every minute.

There is no tumble-down ole plantation house with a baby-crib. Not on your life. The South today is a churning, whirling sprawling, brawling, area of huge hotels and Du Pont and Celanese and guided missiles and the hydrogen bomb; and three quarters of a million people lining the streets for the retail merchants' Thanksgiving Day parades, and a day-to-day industrialization without parallel in the history of our country. The Chambers of Commerce cannot even keep up with the advertising brochures; all they can do is advise you where you may possibly find a parking space for your car.

But there is an interesting story behind this. Many of my fellow liberals in the North love to hang on to the "Tobacco Road" idea of the South. They hate to let go. And the "white supremacists" of the South of course refuse to let go of that ole plantation with Uncle Remus rolling in laughter under the magnolia tree. Well, that's all gone. All a dream. There's no Tobacco Road and there's no plantation and there's certainly no Uncle Remus. "Tobacco Road" today is full of TV antennas, with an electric washing machine on every back porch, and Mrs. Jeter Lester is not begging ole Dude to bring her a turnip. What she is doing right now is getting dressed up to go to the Tuesday afternoon garden club or maybe to a meeting of the League of Women Voters.

Under that ole magnolia tree is the country club with a French chef who gets $8,000 a year; and the delicatessen stores are loaded with Presbyterian folk who are asking for "Jewish rye bread," and down in Dallas they have a Gourmet Club where at each meeting they serve matso-ball soup, chicken a la Russe, tossed green salad, and Babà au Rum served with Chablis.

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In reality, I ain't nothing but a frustrated preacher, and I hereby admit it. But for the life of me I fail to see the necessity of all the triple talk and water dunking as a pre-requisite to believing in God. It just ain't necessary . . . and, most certainly, one of basic practices of any religion should be tolerance of heathens, as well as other forms of animal life.

As a matter of fact, were I Dean of a school of Religion, the first person I'd invite to speak would be the devil.

All's well in Mississippi . . . so long as Mum for the Magnolia holds out!

Memo to advertisers: Gentlemen, as a result of Al Vorspan's REPORTER article on March 21st the paper has picked up approximately 250 new subscribers. That now brings the total almost to 300.

Last week a gentleman in Milwaukee stopped in at a tavern one evening. This week I received a check for two subscriptions as a result. I wish more people would visit taverns more often.

One thing I think needs a little clearing up, at least in these parts. I was in New York in February and while there I went up to see a friend and as I got off the elevator a lady was waiting to get on. I was introduced to Miss Field. We shook hands and I said "how-de-do" politely, and that's all there was to that. But it developed later that I had met Betty Field, the actress, and had not recognized her. In my own defense I'd like to say that it was a nasty day and Miss Field had on a raincoat and rain hat.

Anyway, returning home I told Billie, my wife, about having met Miss Field. In re-telling it, Billie, just helping to keep my reputation intact, when asked what I said to Miss Field, tells everyone that I said: "And are you a subscriber to my paper, Miss Field?"

At the risk of doing damage to my commercial reputation I would like to say that I did not ask the question of Miss Field. Darnit, I forgot to . . . and that's the only reason!

After limited consideration of proposed Civil Rights Legislation I am in complete agreement with the great

(Continued on Page 2)

receive.

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Thank you very much.

Very truly yours,

James B. Reid.

Milwaukee. Wisconsin
20 April, 1957

Dear Mr. East:

I have read with interest an article, "The Iconoclast of Petal, Mississippi", which appeared in the March 21 issue of The Reporter. It goes without saying that the title was intriguing, but the article itself caused one to forget the title.

Certainly you and I share a bit of common philosophy; namely, that people most often can stand to be rebuked when they cannot endure being laughed at. I think that the latter, on many occasions, is far more effective because then the offender is less likely to attempt to defend the indefensible and more likely to indulge in introspection.

Although I'm not a native of Mississippi, I feel that to some degree my roots are there in that my maternal grandmother was freed as a slave from Louis Thompson's plantation at Canton, Mississippi and she and my mother moved to Nashville, Tennessee in 1890. Although I can no longer lay claim to youth, reminiscences of my grandmother are fresh in my memory. For that reason, I have never had a burning desire to become a resident of that state.

I cannot, however, bring myself to believe that even in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas or Texas that white people as individuals are as unreasoning and unreasonable in their prejudices and consequent overt treatment of Negroes as often we are led to believe. One must, therefore, ask oneself if it isn't a matter of conforming to a pre-Civil War social order.

When one looks the facts squarely in the face, it would seem that with most of us, tradition becomes sacrosanct. I cannot escape the conviction that people as individuals, whatever their color, are intellectually democratic — and

(Continued on Page 2)

Not on your life. The South today is a churning, whirling sprawling, brawling, area of huge hotels and Du Pont and Celanese and guided missiles and the hydrogen bomb; and three quarters of a million people lining the streets for the retail merchants' Thanksgiving Day parades, and a day-to-day industrialization without parallel in the history of our country. The Chambers of Commerce cannot even keep up with the advertising brochures; all they can do is advise you where you may possibly find a parking space for your car.

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Under that ole magnolia tree is the country club with a French chef who gets $8,000 a year; and the delicatessen stores are loaded with Presbyterian folk who are asking for "Jewish rye bread," and down in Dallas they have a Gourmet Club where at each meeting they serve matso-ball soup, chicken a la Russe, tossed green salad, and Babà au Rum served with Chablis.

The folks Nawth, who refuse to give up the "Tobacco Road" idea feel somehow that this legend helps emphasize the struggle to end racial segregation in the south. And this is precisely the point I want to make. If the South were still "Tobacco Road" there would be no current problem about ending racial segregation at all! The Negro was satisfied with his status when he looked around and saw nothing but the poverty of "Tobacco Road" and the cotton mill towns. He was satisfied to be OUT. Today the story all around him is oh, so entirely different, and now he wants IN. This has been the pattern of all social and economic change in world history. Only when things are GOOD do the people want them BETTER. Only twetny-five years ago the Negro would tip his hat to you as you walked along the street. Well, he doesn't tip his hat to you today. Not by a long shot, and neither is he rolling in laughter under the magnolia tree. He doesn't have the time. Today he is walking briskly along the street on his way to pick up his little girl at the dancing school; that is, if he's not arguing a new writ before a Federal judge. He is not in "Egypt." He is standing squarely on top of Mt. Nebo—and he wants the Promised Land because it is finally within his reach.

Now if Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan are serious about producing a movie about the South, as it really is today, I am willing to provide them with following outline, free of charge:—

I would have Eli Wallach play the role of a manufacturer of ladies' foundation garments; slips and brassieres, with a factory on West 36th Street and Seventh Avenue. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union is after him to sign a new contract and Eli (like so many hundreds of others), decides to clear out of New York. He makes arrangements for a new factory in the magnolia-scented town of Kenilworth, South Carolina, where the folks are raising a half-million dollars to provide Eli with the new factory building.

To throw the union off the track, Eli calls his new brassiere factory "Balance Agriculture with Industry, Incorporated", but he has made one big mistake. He has recently promoted Baby Doll, his former model, to a fifty per cent partnership in his business and she is now following him down to Kenilworth in her new Jaguar. And this is where old Karl Malden comes in. Karl plays David Dubinsky, who has been keeping an eye on Baby Doll all this time, and he catches up with her in Charlotte, North Carolina. They play hide and seek in an old plantation house which now houses The Carolina Israelite, and in the scuffle Dubinsky succeeds in getting Baby Doll to sign the new contract on behalf of "Balance Agriculture With Industry, Incorporated."

The big scene, however, is where the Mayor of Kenilworth is dedicating the new factory;—"We are mighty proud of the new factory, Mr. Eli, and on behalf of all your good neighbors of Kenilworth I hereby hand you this certificate which makes your company rent-free, water-free, power-free, and tax-free for the first five years of your operations; and one thing more, Mr. Eli, and I'm certainly mighty proud to be able to say this to you-all;—we are a very peaceful little town here with no trouble and you can be sure

(Continued on Page 2)

East Side . . .

Southern Statesmen who declare such a bill as "Civil Wrongs."

There may be some slight difference of opinion as to why, but it's of no consequence whatsoever. Why Civil Wrongs? Simple: That in this Nation, under the guarantee of the Bill of Rights, the proposal even had to be made!

Even to me, a Dixiecrat, such lack of concern for civil rights seems distasteful and stupid . . . how, then, do you suppose it appears to the entire world where we are peddling democracy, or trying to? We ain't doing too hot, I fear. Oh, well, let us face the Delta and bow three times.

Heel, James. (Must have been that linotype operator again!)

Baby Doll . . .

of one thing—you'll never be bothered by them union fellows down here . . . " Just then Baby Doll rushes on to the grandstand, followed by David Dubinsky, who waves the newly-signed union contract and shouts into the loud-speaker, **"We start picketing tomorrow."**

(The editor of this paper has not decided whether or not Mr. Golden has the proper respect for Baby Doll, next to Magnolias Mississippi's greatest claim to fame.)

A century ago 400 vessels with 13,000 men sailed from Newfoundland to hunt seals. This season only three Newfoundland seal vessels sailed.

If you are a competent do-it-yourself man, you should be able to hang a single roll of wallpaper over 36 square feet of wall in 15 minutes.

Letters . . .

shall we say Christian, but emotionally they feel impelled, if not compelled, to conform to existing patterns of behavior. To be a non conformist in our society requires what, in the parlance of the street, is called "guts". Believe it or not, some of us Negroes have at times been subjected to the criticism of our friends because of having numbered among our acquaintances and friends white people. It isn't always easy; but in time, one's critics begin also to see the light and find that the earth continues to move in the same direction in its orbit.

Those who continue to advertise in your paper are the types of individuals who say by their action to the rest of the world, "I believe in democracy; I believe in the Judea-Christian religion and refuse to talk out of both corners of my mouth at the same time."

I certainly hope you will stick to the program of helping to make the United States a better place in which to live for all people regardless of race, nationality, sex or ancestry.

Sincerely yours,
WILLIAM V. KELLEY

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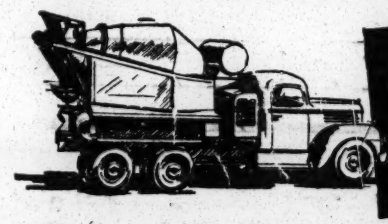

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Mississippi's greatest claim to fame.)

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If you are a competent do-it-yourself man, you should be able to hang a single roll of wallpaper over 36 square feet of wall in 15 minutes.

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WE DELIVER

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ALONG THE R. F. D.

By Rose Budd Stevens

HAPPIEST EASTER OF ALL WAS WHEN BRIGHTLY COLORED TURTLES WERE GIFT TO ROSE BUDD.

"Cousin Cat," Milkinson and his wife Kitty lived in a great rambling house built way back when labor was almost free and all the materials came from the homeplace, 'bout six miles to the west. The house could have just as easily been built close to the ground, but the sandrocks that were used for the pillars were huge, some as tall as I was when seven years old; hence the house was built to accommodate the pillars and not the other way round.

The plans of Couzin Cat were big and as everyone who would listen to him knew entirely too grand for his money that came from the soil, made by the sweat of his and Cousin Kitty's brows.

There were rooms on the ground floor that were never finished . . . the upstairs rooms were floored and ceiled, the third story nothing more than a shell with great chimneys piercing through its darkness, they soared high above the roof and were ornamented with rods, said to keep lightning from striking the house.

I loved the little black horse that turned this way and that, as did a cock-o-the-walk whose breast was arched whichever way the wind happened to be blowing.

The kitchen and dining room were a little world apart, joined to the house by a walkway, roofed and closed in with climbing vines in the summer. Pot plants here with wild spurts and it was nothing to visit one Sunday and on Wednesday of the same week, when visiting again to find a vine had grown five inches, measured by Cousin Cat with great pride.

The neighbors, and his own kin, as well as flesh and blood said right out loud and to his face that ifhe and his wife worked in the fields half as hard as they did in the flowers they could pay off the mortgage on the place.

The kitchen of this home seemed a fairy land to me; strings of red peppers hung from the rafters; the biggest stove ever sat in one corner and had a tank that held thirty gallons of water, so hot a man could dip some and scald a cat if the need arose, so said Couzin Cat.

A safe with pierced tin doors held goodies that we never had in abundance at our house . . . a whole cheese wrapped in a vinegar soaked cloth; tea cakes made with white sugar, that had great blobs of chocolate icing sticking two or three together. Bought candy in a jar shaped like a shoe . . . beautiful with roses of an impossible shade of purple growing over it . . . there was a stone crock of fried down patty sausage, covered over with pure white lard. We were welcome to help ourselves any time a hunger bug bit us, and always there was a plate of cold biscuits, big fellows with plenty of crumb that soaked up syrup if the desire for a finger biscuit hit us.

The syrup pitcher had a sterling silver top made in the form of a squirrel, and when you wanted syrup you simply preessed on the tail of the squirrel and the mouth opened and out poured the thick sweet liquid.

Every Easter the Wilkinson couple surprised us with something; one year it was a set of acorn cups and saucers for me . . another year it was a box of gaily colored eggs decorated in what we call today modern form.

The surprise was inside, for as I peeled the eggs carefully, ac-

(Continued On Page 4)

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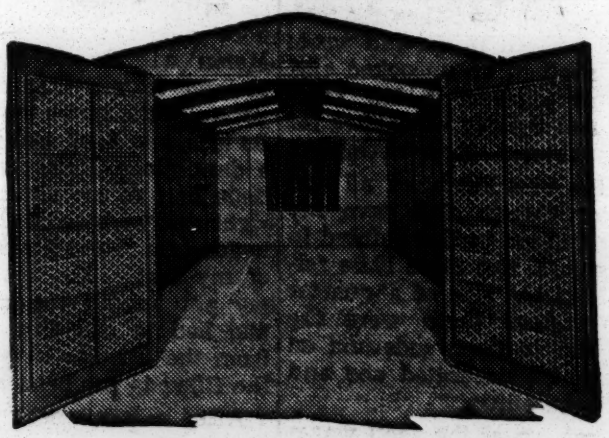

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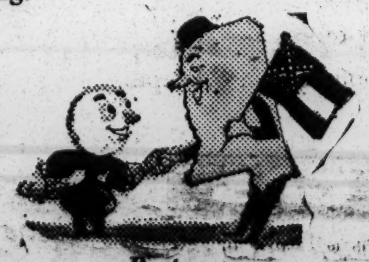

Partners in Progress

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Entered as second class matter April 3, 1954, at the Post Office at Petal, Mississippi, under Act of March 3, 1879. Reentered at Pascagoula, Miss.

TELEPHONE DIAL 4-6613
P. D. EAST ..... Editor

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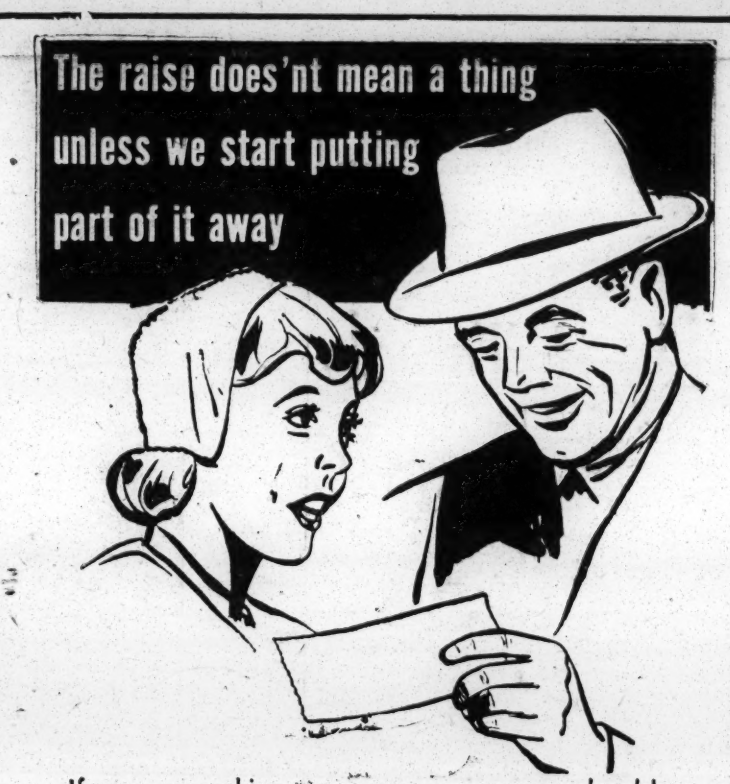

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R. F. D. . . .

cording to instructions from Cousin Kitty, I found messages written on the white of the eggs. Cousin Kittie said she made an "ink" using one (1) ounce of alum in a half-pint of vinegar, then she took a small pointed brush and wrote on the shell of an uncooked egg. This was allowed to dry thoroughly and the egg was boiled for fifteen minutes—then decorated.

But the best Easter of all was the year Cousin Cat gave my brother and me turtles painted in bright colors. Not these little fellows about the size of a quarter . . . no indeed these were the kind found in the woods and on dry land. He decorated one and his wife the other.

Each section of the shell was a different flower, bird or scene. When he came to bring our Easter presents he brought boards to make a small pen for the turtles and a bucket of white sand to put in the bottom.

So enchanted were we over the turtles we completely forgot to hunt for egges hidden among the violets and lilies . . . it was a thrilling experience to have a bright pet that could shut itself up at will.

Of course I must bring my turtle in the house and use it for a door stop in the living room. Mama with much patience explained to me that once things got quiet the turtle would put out its legs, and head and take off for a dark place. I simply didn't believe her; to my sorrow she was right and we tore the house apart looking for "Rose Budd" the name of my turtle. Uncle Jack found my pet behind the meal barrel and had to call Big Footed Joe from the barn to help him move the filled to the brim barrel.

After a few weeks our turtles wandered away (now I know with the help of mama) and were seen around Shady Rest no more. Three years later Uncle Jack taking a short cut through some woods saw my turtle crawling along, still bright and cheerful . . . with Rose Budd painted right in the middle of its back.

Yesterday Dale had the horrible experience of seeing a boy dragged to death by a mule. Not once in 35 years had I remembered the time when Shelby Weatherspoon was killed by a mule . . . dragged over field rows, bumped into waist high stumps, across a rocky creek, up a clay bank through a barbed wire fence, slammed into a burning brush pile, gored by a bull and charged by a bulldob . . . and lived long enough to instruct his standing around boys, to take care of their maw and be good children. I'll tell you of that some other day.

Sweetly be,

Rose Budd.

TB Association Meeting Is Held

The Forrest County Tuberculosis Association was represented last week at the Forty-Fifth annual meeting of the Mississippi Tuberculosis Association in the Robert E. Lee Hotel, Jackson.

Group sessions and activities of local tuberculosis associations were part of the two day meeting.

Miss Lou Lewis, Public Health Educator, Forrest County Health Department appeared on the Health Educators panel. She discussed the role of the Hattiesburg School Health Council in teacher promoting educational projects. Miss Lewis displayed posters made by local city and county school students. The winning posters this year were made by: Julia Glass and Genie Lou Carutt, Hawkins Junior High; Dorothy McCullough and Judith Ware from Davis School. These students will receive recognition.

During the luncheon on the Roof Garden of the Robert E. Lee Hotel, Miss Mary Elizabeth Chaze, 1013 West Pine Street, received the State and National Award for her editorial on tuberculosis in the Hattiesburg Senior High School paper, Hi Flashes. Miss Brenda Helms, editor of the paper also received recognition.

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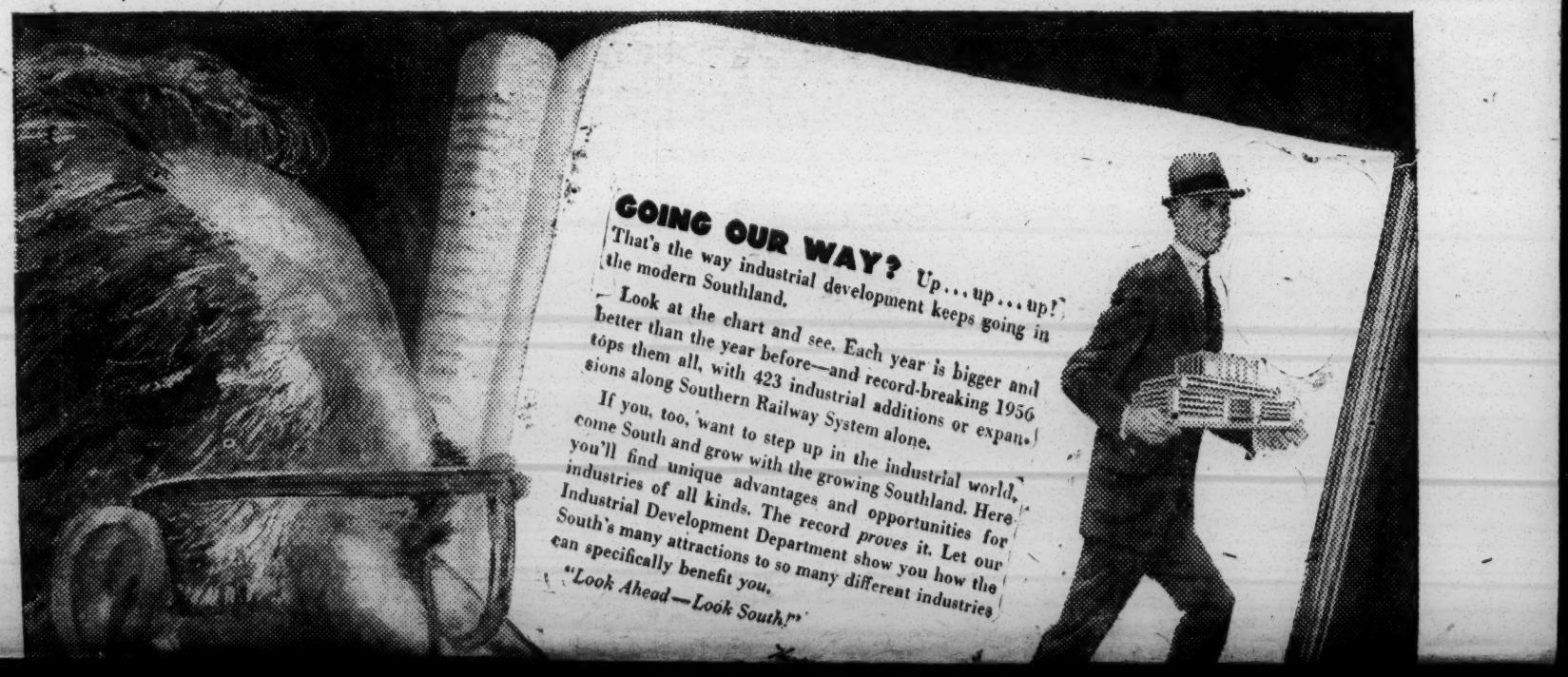
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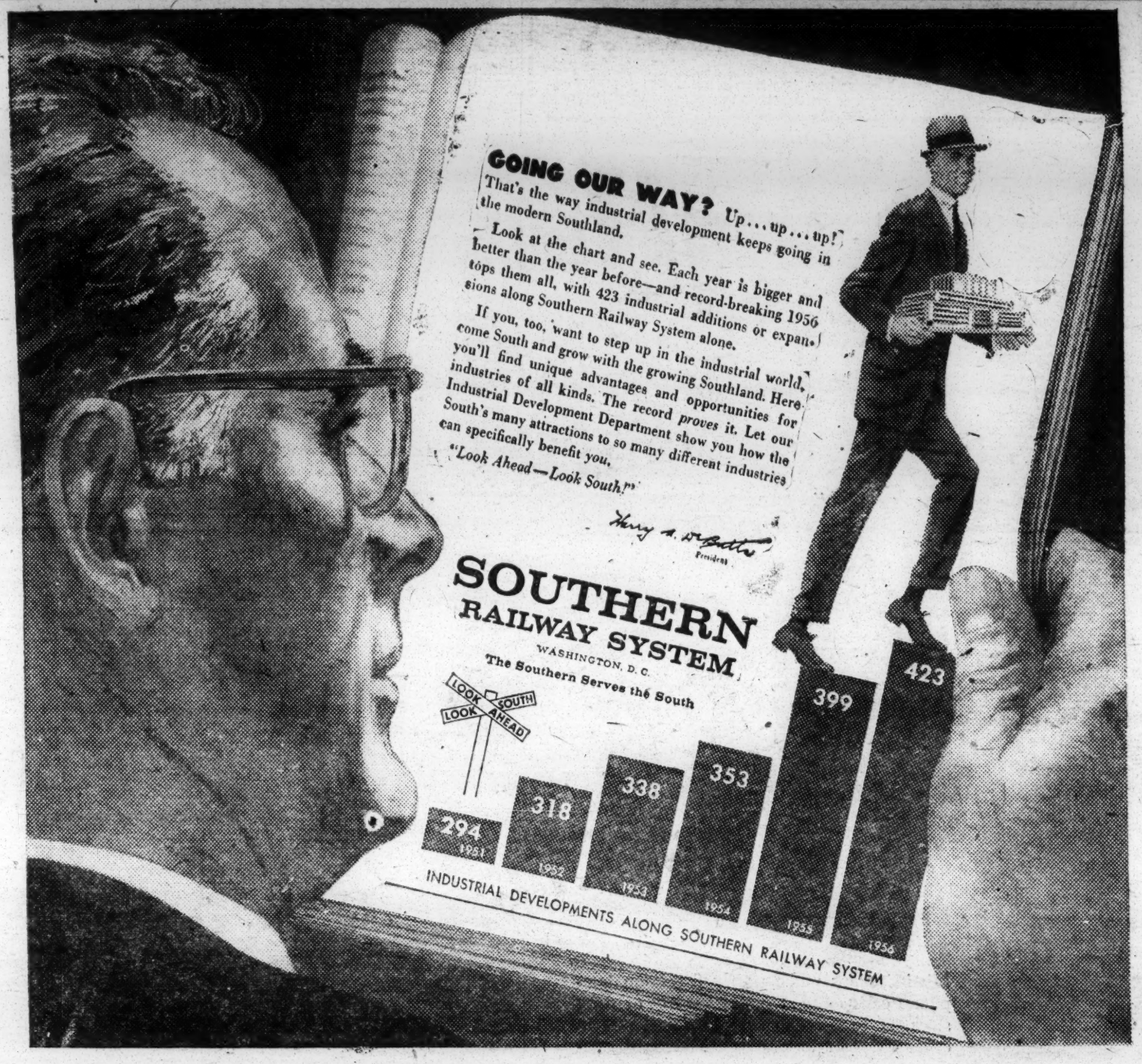
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